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## A new species of lowland skink (genus *Lipinia* Gray, 1845) from northeastern Peninsular Malaysia

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### Abstract

A new species of scincid lizard, *Lipinia sekayuensis* **sp. nov.** from Hutan Lipur Sekayu, Terengganu State in northeastern Peninsular Malaysia is most similar to *L. surda* (Boulenger) but differentiated from it and all other species of *Lipinia* by having the combination of an adult SVL of 42.3 mm; six supralabials; five infralabials; four supraoculars; prefrontals widely separated; two loreals; fused frontoparietals; lower eyelids bearing a large, transparent disc; 21 midbody scale rows; 56 paravertebra scale rows; 65 ventral scale rows; enlarged, precloacal scales; 10 subdigital lamellae on the third finger; 11, 15, and seven lamellae on the third, fourth, and fifth toes, respectively; distal subdigital lamellae keeled; a median row of slightly enlarged, subcaudal scales present; a generally unicolor, dark-brown dorsum bearing nine very faint, diffuse, darker stripes; and an external ear opening replaced by a scaly, auditory depression.

**Key words:** Scincidae, new taxon, Hutan Lipur Sekayu, Malaysia

### Introduction

The genus *Lipinia* is a modest radiation of Southeast Asian and Oceanian skinks that contains at least 27 species (Das & Austin 2007). *Lipinia* extends from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India (Das 1999), east through Thailand and Cambodia to the Philippines, and southward through the Thai-Malay Peninsula and Singapore to Sumatra and Borneo (Das & Austin 2007). Its extensive distribution continues eastward across many islands of the Indo-Australian Archipelago to New Guinea (Günther 2000) and onward throughout much of the South Pacific (Adler *et al.* 1995). Many species of *Lipinia* are generally small, diurnal, somewhat secretive, terrestrial skinks that spend time foraging through surface debris and in low shrubs searching for small arthropods. Others however, are arboreal, rainforest species with strikingly bold color patterns and are commonly seen moving up and down the trunks of large trees, often several meters above the ground. *Lipinia* is likely a polyphyletic assemblage but generally characterized by being small (SVL < 57 mm except for *L. venemai* Brongersma); slender-bodied; boldly striped (except for *L. surda* [Boulenger]); having fused or separate frontoparietals; prefrontals that are widely separated; an external ear opening present or absent; scales of the vertebral rows generally wider than the more lateral rows; having smooth scales; a lower eyelid bearing an enlarged, transparent disc (except for *L. leptosoma* [Brown & Fehlmann]); and expanded, basal, subdigital lamellae (Greer 1974).

During a herpetological survey on 30 March 2013 of the Hutan Lipur Sekayu region in the state of Terengganu, northeastern Peninsular Malaysia (Fig. 1), we found an individual skink bearing the diagnostic traits of *Lipinia* and closely resembling *L. surda* in lacking a bold striping pattern and an external ear opening. However, it had a number of scale and color pattern characteristics that clearly separate it from *L. surda*. As such, we describe it below as new.

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